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Agenda item 110 (b)
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 7 June 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw to your attention the statement on Nepal issued on 2 June 1999 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Dieter **Kastrup**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

99-17065 (E) 110699 110699

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on Nepal issued on 2 June 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the decision to abolish the death penalty taken earlier this month by the Nepalese authorities.

The European Union considers that the abolition of capital punishment contributes to the gradual growth of human dignity and to the development of human rights.

The European Union regards the decision of the Nepalese authorities as a gesture by Nepal towards the furtherance of human rights. It fits perfectly into the democratic process that has taken place in Nepal in recent years.

Nepal's decision lends support to the worldwide movement for the abolition of the death penalty.

The European Union once again reasserts its firm commitment in favour of universal abolition of the death penalty or, initially, the introduction of moratoria on executions.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES: QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 8 June 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on 5 June 1999, which revisits Ethiopia's violation of human rights of the Eritrean population by way of aerial bombardment over the past year.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Press release issued on 5 June 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

ETHIOPIA'S INEXORABLE DRIVE TOWARDS FULL-SCALE WAR

Exactly one year ago, at approximately 2.20 p.m., Ethiopian MIG fighter jets bombed Asmara, Eritrea's capital, in what was the first use of aircraft and a major escalation of what, until then, had been a localized border conflict.

The bombing of Asmara occurred on the morrow of a public announcement by Ethiopia's Prime Minister, who told his domestic audience through the local TV and radio that the Ethiopian armed forces had been given orders that day to take all necessary measures to repulse Eritrea's aggression. The Ethiopian Prime Minister gave the orders for escalating the war in spite of Addis Ababa's parallel announcement the same day that it had accepted the United States-Rwanda recommendations.

Forced to react, the Eritrean Air Force bombed the military airport in Mekele, destroying several fighter aircraft. In the retaliatory strikes, stray bombs caused damage to a school, resulting in unfortunate casualties. The Government of Eritrea promptly apologized for the unintentional loss of human life.

Ethiopia again used its air force to bomb Asmara the following day, stopping only after two of its planes were shot down by Eritrean air defence.

The United States brokered a moratorium on air strikes on 14 June, although Ethiopia rejected Eritrean proposals for a total ban on air strikes as a first step towards a comprehensive cessation of hostilities.

The introduction of air strikes by Ethiopia a full year ago takes on a disturbing significance now. In retrospect, the Ethiopian air strikes on 5 June must be seen as a significant reflection of the regime's decision to pursue war, not peace, with Eritrea.

In February this year, after several months of intensive efforts by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other concerned parties, Ethiopia jumped the gun once again in a clear move to thwart peace. This time, however, the offensives unleashed by Ethiopia had all the characteristics of a total war. This occurred despite the OAU peace process that was in motion and in contravention of international calls (OAU, Security Council) for both sides to observe maximum restraint.

Ethiopia's bogus pretext for launching its attack in February were fictitious claims of Eritrean air strikes on Adi-Grat. Again, the timing of the attack reveals a considered decision to impede peace with continued fighting.

The second phase of the Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF) offensives became the venue for an Ethiopian air campaign that selected civilian targets

deep in Eritrea and far from disputed territories. The decision to again resort to air attacks in this period was in contravention of the moratorium on air strikes. Ethiopia's random air raids in the past three months included:

- 7 February, residential quarter in Adi Qualla;
- 8 February, residential quarter in Adi Qualla;
- 9 February, displacement camps in Deda Lalai;
- 6-9 February, villages in Zalambessa and environs;
- 21 February, villages of Menka'ka and Adin (Assab);
- 22 February, town of Tsorona;
- 3 March, Hazemo and environs;
- 16 March, town centre in Kinafina;
- 18-19 March, central market in Shambuko;
- 29 March, Adi Keshi and Koferenko;
- 15 April, church in Adi Koieh and Mendefora;
- 28 April, Bimbina;
- 15 May, Zalambessa;
- 16 May, warehouse in Massawa.

Around 80 Eritrean civilians were either killed or maimed as a result of these strikes. Whole villages (Shambuko), residential quarters, a church, food storage facilities and warehouses were destroyed.

The year since Ethiopia bombed Asmara has illustrated the scale of Ethiopia's intentions and the means by which the TPLF regime is prepared to continually escalate the conflict to deter peace. In one year, Ethiopia has carried out the expulsion of close to 60,000 Eritrean civilians. In one year, Ethiopia has used its mercenary-led air force to attack innocent civilians throughout Eritrea. In one year, Ethiopia has consistently rejected a ceasefire. In one year, Ethiopia has repeatedly, and actively, thwarted efforts for peace. And yet, the border crisis was easily solvable from the outset and remains solvable if the TPLF regime were serious about peace.

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General Assembly

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Fifty-third session
Agenda item 86
Questions relating to information

Letter dated 11 June 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to forward, enclosed herewith, the letter dated 31 May 1999 from Ambassador Branko Brankovic, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva, addressed to Abid Hussain, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, relative to the destruction of the media facilities by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as part of its aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex published as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 86.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

99-17562 (E) 140699

Annex

Letter dated 31 May 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

I am addressing you in regard to the aggression by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which has been going on for 68 days. This undeclared war against an independent and sovereign Federal Republic of Yugoslavia represents the most flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and order, as well as international conventions on human rights and humanitarian law.

Having in mind your mandate, I would like to inform you that NATO is using this specific form of aggression in an effort to silence the media in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The aim of the destruction of a great number of private radio and television stations and more than two dozen TV transmitters and relay stations was to suppress the right to a different opinion and to further expand the war-mongering manipulation of world public opinion. Clearly, the intention of the NATO aggressors is to prevent world public opinion from learning of the extensive scope of their crimes, as well as to impose on the world their totalitarian and single-minded perceptions. The censorship imposed by the NATO generals on the Western media is an illustrative example of this practice.

On 23 April 1999, the NATO aggressors demolished the building of the Radio and Television of Serbia in Belgrade, the largest radio and TV company in the Balkans. During this attack, 16 employees of the Radio and Television of Serbia lost their lives, while 19 sustained severe injuries.

On 3 May 1999, NATO destroyed the building of the Radio and Television of Serbia in Novi Sad, the second largest TV centre in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which broadcast programmes in the languages of all national minorities living in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Every day, a 56-hour programme was broadcast in the Hungarian, Slovak, Ruthenian, Romanian and Romany languages, which is in line with the commitment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to guarantee equal rights to information to all its citizens.

By the bombing of the business centre "Usce" in Belgrade on 21 and 27 April 1999, the headquarters as well as the production and broadcasting infrastructure of the three private TV stations and four private radio stations were destroyed.

Several dozen TV transmitters and relay stations used by State-run or private TV and radio stations were destroyed during the NATO air strikes. The TV transmitter on Mt. Avala, the biggest transmitter in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which according to its architectural design was unique in the world, was razed to the ground. NATO also destroyed the TV transmitters situated in the business centre "Usce", on Fruska Gora, Gules (Pristina) and others, as well as relay stations in Krijaca, Borca, on Bukulja, Cer, Crni Vrh, Jastrebac, Ovcar, Tornik, etc.

Making good on its threat to "destroy the nerve centres of Serbia", the aggressor warplanes destroyed the satellite station "Jugoslavija" near Ivanjica, which transmitted PTT and TV signals worldwide. Also destroyed were telephone exchanges in Pristina (7 April 1999), Kragujevac and Uzice (7 May 1999), while many others were damaged or made inoperative in other towns of Serbia.

In its latest attempt to prevent world public opinion from seeing the terrible consequences of their vandalism in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, i.e., the killing of innocent people, bombing of hospitals and schools, destruction of the infrastructure and economy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, NATO has exerted pressure on the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization (EUTELSAT) to discontinue the transmission of the Radio-TV Serbia satellite programme and thus make it inaccessible in European countries.

Such acts by NATO, led by the United States of America, which took on itself to be the global leader for freedom of the media, are contrary to the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, articles 19 and 20. These acts are also contrary to the provisions of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

For all champions of the freedom of speech and for all people committed to the right to freedom of expression, these destructive acts represent the last warning alarm before NATO censorship takes control over all the media of the so-called "free world".

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expects you, in your capacity as Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, to condemn publicly such acts by NATO and to request EUTELSAT to continue the transmission of the Radio-TV Serbia satellite programme, because such acts by NATO breach the above-mentioned instruments.

I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed herewith, the statement by the Ministry for Information of the Republic of Serbia in regard to the decision of EUTELSAT to discontinue the transmission of the Radio-TV Serbia satellite programme.

(*Signed*) Branko **Brankovic**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.